Leon Trotsky issued the following statement to the British press:

FOR twenty years the mainspring of German imperialism remained tightly wedged. When this spring began to expand, the diplomatic chancellories were disconcerted. The prolonged and sterile negotiations between London-Paris and Moscow, following Munich, constituted the second stage of their discomposure. From 1933 on I declared continually in the world press that the fundamental aim of Stalin's foreign policy was the reaching of an agreement with Hitler. But my voice was too modest to convince the masters of fate. Stalin staged his low comedy, "the struggle for democracy," and this comedy was believed, at least in part. Almost until the last day, Augur, semi-official London correspondent of the New York Times, repeated his assurances that an agreement with Moscow would be reached. Painfully instructive is the fact that the Stalinist parliament ratified the German-Soviet pact on the very day that Germany invaded Poland!

The general cause of war lies in the irreconcilable contradictions of world imperialism. The particular percussion, however, which opened up military operations was the concluding of the Soviet-German pact. During the preceding months, Goebbels, Foerster, and the other German politicians persistently repeated that the "day" for decisive action would soon arrive. It is inescapably clear now that this day was the one on which Molotov affixed his signature to the German-Soviet pact. No power can erase this from the annals of history!

It is not at all that the Kremlin feels closer to the totalitarian states than to the democratic. This does not determine the choice of orientation in international affairs. Despite all his aversion for the Soviet regime, the conservative parliamentarian Chamberlain tried with all his might to gain an alliance with Stalin. The alliance was not realized because Stalin fears Hitler. And it is not by accident that he fears him. The Red Army is decapitated. This is not phraseology but a tragic fact. Voroshilov is a fabrication. His authority is created artificially through totalitarian propaganda. On his dizzy pinnacle he remains what he always was, a hide-bound backwoodsman, without vision, without culture, without military ability, and even without talent as an administrator. The whole country knows that. In the "purged" military staff not a single name remains in which the army could place confidence. The Kremlin fears the army and fears Hitler. Stalin requires peace – at any price.

Before Hohenzollern Germany toppled under the blows of the war coalition, it dealt a mortal blow to the Czarist regime; furthermore the Western Allies egged on the Russian liberal bourgeoisie and even supported the plans for a palace revolution. The present incumbents of the Kremlin asked themselves anxiously: may not this historical incident repeat itself in a new way? Had the Soviet oligarchy been capable of self-sacrifice or at least the slightest degree of self-denial in the military interests of the U.S.S.R., it would not have decapitated and demoralized the army.

The simpletons who are “pro-Soviet” deem it self-evident that the Kremlin hopes to overthrow Hitler. The case is otherwise. Without revolution the overthrow of Hitler is inconceivable. A victorious revolution in Germany would raise the class-consciousness of the broad masses in the U.S.S.R. to a very high level and render impossible the further existence of the Moscow tyranny. The Kremlin prefers the status quo, with Hitler as its ally.

Serves Imperialist Aims

Caught off guard by the pact, the Kremlin’s professional apologists now attempt to argue that our former prognoses contemplated an aggressive military alliance between Moscow and Berlin, whereas in reality only a pacifist agreement of “non-aggression” was concluded. Miserable sophistry! We never spoke of an aggressive military alliance in the direct sense of the term. On the contrary, we always started from the fact that the international policy of the Kremlin was determined by the new aristocracy’s interests in preserving itself, by its dread of the people, by its incapacity to conduct a war. Any international combination has some value for the Soviet bureaucracy insofar as it liberates it from the necessity of resorting to the force of armed workers and peasants. And yet the German-Russian Pact is a military alliance in the full sense of the word, for it serves the aims of aggressive imperialist war.

In the last war Germany was defeated primarily because of the lack of raw materials of the U.S.S.R. It is not accidental that the concluding of the political pact was preceded by the concluding of a trade agreement. Moscow is far from any thought of renouncing it. On the contrary, in his speech yesterday before the Supreme Council, Molotov stressed above all the exceptional economic advantages of the friendship with Hitler. The pact of non-aggression, that is, a passive attitude toward German aggression, is thus rounded out by a treaty of economic collaboration in the interest of the aggression. The pact assures Hitler the possibility of utilizing Soviet raw materials exactly as Italy in its attack on Ethiopia utilized Russian oil. While the military experts of England and France in Moscow studied the Baltic map from the point of view of military operations between the U.S.S.R. and Germany, the German and Soviet experts at the very same time were considering what measures to take in order to safeguard maritime routes in the Baltic sea for continuous trade relations during wartime.

Occupation of Poland will assure contiguous boundaries with the Soviet Union and a further development of economic relations. Such is the essence of the pact. In Mein Kampf Hitler declares that an alliance between two states which does not have as its aim the prosecution of war “is absurd and sterile.” The German-Soviet pact is neither absurd nor sterile – it is a military alliance with a division of roles: Hitler conducts the military operations, Stalin acts as his quartermaster. And still

there are people who seriously assert that the objective of the present Kremlin is world revolution!

Lenin’s Policy Was Different

With Chicherin as Minister of Foreign Affairs in Lenin’s government, Soviet foreign policy considered its real task to be the international triumph of socialism, and sought, incidentally, to utilize the antagonisms among the great powers with the aim of defending the Soviet Republic. With Litvinov, the program of world revolution was supplanted by concern for the maintenance of the status quo through a system of “collective security.” But when the idea of “collective security” neared partial realization, the Kremlin became alarmed at the military obligations which were entailed. Litvinov was replaced by Molotov who knows no obligation other than that of preserving unimpaired the interests of the ruling caste. Chicherin’s policy, that is, Lenin’s essentially, was long ago decreed a policy of romanticism. For a certain time Litvinov’s policy was considered the policy of realism. The policy of Stalin-Molotov is a policy of unadulterated cynicism.

“In a united front of peace-loving nations which are really opposed to aggression the Soviet Union cannot fail to participate in the front ranks,” Molotov declared at the Supreme Council three months ago. What appalling irony in those words now! The Soviet Union has taken its place in the rear ranks of those states which up to yesterday the Kremlin persistently denounced as the aggressors.

What the Kremlin Gains

The immediate advantages the Kremlin government receives from the alliance with Hitler are quite tangible. The U.S.S.R. remains out of war. Hitler removes from the immediate agenda his campaign for a “greater Ukraine.” Japan remains isolated. With the postponement of the war danger on the western frontier, one can envisage at the same time, as a consequence, a weakening of the pressure on the eastern frontier, perhaps even the conclusion of an agreement with Japan. It is quite likely, moreover, that in exchange for Poland, Hitler will give Moscow freedom of action in regard to the Baltic states bordering the U.S.S.R. However, though the “advantages” may be great, they are at best of an episodic nature and their sole guarantee is Ribbentrop’s signature to a “scrap of paper.” Meanwhile the war places questions of life arid death on the order of the day for peoples, states, regimes, ruling classes. Germany is carrying out in stages her program of domination by war. With the help of England, she re-armed despite the opposition of France. With the help of Poland she isolated Czechoslovakia. With the help of the Soviet Union she not only wishes to enslave Poland but to destroy the old colonial empires. If Germany succeeds with the Kremlin’s help in emerging victorious from the present war, that will signify mortal danger for the Soviet Union. Let us recall that directly after the Munich agreement, Dimitroff,

secretary of the Comintern, made public – undoubtedly on Stalin's order – an explicit calendar of Hitler's future conquests. The occupation of Poland is scheduled in that calendar for the fall of 1939. Next in order follow: Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria, France, Belgium ... And then, at the bottom, in the fall of 1941, the offensive is to begin against the Soviet Union. These revelations must undoubtedly be based upon information obtained by the Soviet espionage service. It is impossible, of course, to take this blue-print literally – the march of events introduces modifications into all such calculations. Nevertheless, the first link of the plan – occupation of Poland in the fall of 1939 is now being consummated. It is very likely that the brief delay of two years between the destruction of Poland, according to the plan, and the offensive against the Soviet Union is approximately correct. In the Kremlin they cannot help understanding this. It is not for nothing that they have proclaimed many times: "peace is indivisible." If Stalin notwithstanding becomes Hitler's quartermaster, it signifies that the ruling caste is no longer capable of thinking about tomorrow. Its formula is that of all doomed regimes: "after us the deluge."

Seals Doom of the Comintern

It would be a vain task to attempt at this time to predict the course of the war and the fate of its various participants, including thyse who still cherish the illusory hope of remaining outside of the catastrophe. It is given to no man to survey in its entirety this vast arena and turmoil of infinitely complex material and moral forces. Only the war itself will decide the destiny of the war. One of the major differences between the present war and the last one is the radio. It is first now that I see this clearly as I listen here in Coyoacan, a suburb of the Mexican capital, to speeches in the Berlin Reichstag and to news dispatches from London, Paris, and New York City. Thanks to the radio, people will depend much less than in the last war on totalitarian news from their own government and they will be infected much more rapidly by the moods of people in other countries. In this sphere the Kremlin has already suffered a great defeat. The Comintern, most important instrument of the Kremlin for influencing public opinion in other countries, is in reality the first victim of the German-Soviet pact. The fate of Poland has not yet been decided. But the Comintern is already a corpse. It is being forsaken from one side by the patriots and from the other by the internationalists. Tomorrow by radio we will undoubtedly hear the voices of the Communist leaders of yesterday revealing, in the interest of their respective governments, in all the languages of the civilized world, including Russian, the treason of the Kremlin.

The disintegration of the Comintern will not fail to deal an irreparable blow to the authority of the ruling caste in the consciousness of the broad masses of the Soviet Union itself. Thus the policy of cynicism which was designed to reinforce the position of the Stalinist oligarchy, will in reality speed the hour of its downfall.

The war will topple many things and many individuals. Artifice, trickery, frame-ups, and treasons will prove of no avail in escaping its severe judgment. But my article would be greatly misunderstood if it led to the conclusion that everything new introduced by the October Revolution into the life of mankind will be cast aside. I am profoundly convinced of the opposite. The new form of economy, freed from the insufferable fetters of the bureaucracy, will not only withstand this test of fire, but also serve as a basis for a new culture which, let us hope, will put an end to war forever.

Coyoacan, D.F.

September 2, 1939

Leon Trotsky